The Legacy of Penn Jones, Jr.

by David Welsh

The 'Sleuths'

ANYONE CAN WRITE to the Government Printing Office and, for $76, order the 26 volumes of testimony and exhibits. Hundreds of Americans, nagged by doubts about the completeness of the investigation, did just that. For a surprisingly large number of people, reading the volumes, establishing card files and interviewing witnesses became an all-consuming avocation. Working in virtual isolation from each other, methodically recompiling the evidence, it was only gradually that these amateur "sleuths" learned of one another's existence.

In time there developed a network of Kennedy assassination buffs, linked coast-to-coast by a bush telegraph of manifold ramifications. When one uncovered a startling new piece of evidence, the information spread like fire through plains grass until, before the week was out, it was common knowledge among all the operatives of this private intelligence *apparat*.

Some, like New York author Sylvia Meagher or Marjorie Deschamps, a west coast housewife, scholars of the Warren Report and 26 volumes, can quote chapter and verse on almost any facet of the case. Mrs. Meagher, finding the Commission's index next to useless, prepared and published her own. Mrs. Deschamps put together a hundred giant "panoplies"—photostats of collected evidence—on different facets of the case. The "sleuth" ranks include salesman Ray Marcus; David Lifton, a master's candidate in engineering; and housewife Elizabeth Stoneborough—all serious students of the photographic evidence relating to the assassination. Physicist Paul Hoch dug into the National Archives for hidden documents. Philadelphia lawyer Vincent Salandria did pioneer research on the ballistics and autopsy evidence; writer Harold Feldman on the direction of shots. Add to them the book-writers—Mark Lane, the most persistent public gadfly of the Warren Commission; Harold Weisberg, a Maryland gentleman farmer; and Leo Sauvage, the conservative U.S. correspondent for Le Figaro—and you have an awesome army of private citizens who are saying more or less explicitly: "The government lied to us about the Kennedy assassination."

Few of the sleuths are paid for their efforts, or reimbursed for long-distance phone calls, travel and research materials. Motivated by anything from an affection for President Kennedy to a plain zeal for truth, affiliated only in the most informal way, they are the embodiment of what is finest in the American tradition, and a living indictment of government-by-closed-shop.

At first we refused to take the sleuths seriously. Everyone secretly wants to be a detective. Here was the "crime of the century," apparently unsolved, with a mountain of poorly evaluated evidence at the disposal of anyone willing to shell out 76 bills. To the private sleuths it was irresistible; to us it was something of a joke. Then we reviewed their work and realized that they were doing the job the Dallas police, the FBI and the Warren Commission should have done in the first place.

And if many will treat these amateur investigators as

some unique breed of kook, the Dallas police take them seriously. When Shirley Martin, a housewife from Hominy, Oklahoma, made trips to Dallas to interview witnesses, the police would tail her, openly following her car at short distance, and stay in her shadow until she left town. The FBI takes one of the "sleuths" seriously enough to tap his phone. Two San Francisco sleuths report that even their mail is habitually opened before it reaches their door. Such intimidation has become so common that the sleuths hardly talk about it any more.

ON OUR TRIPS TO DALLAS, Bill Turner, I, and editor Stan Sheinbaum interviewed many persons touched in some way by the killing of Kennedy. Some were willing to talk freely; most were guarded. Many said there was no conspiracy to assassinate the President, but almost invariably they would indicate they thought otherwise: a playful smile, a wink, a sardonic turn around the corners of the mouth.

Photography of the Assassination by Phil Willis

Others treated the Warren Report with open contempt.

We interviewed lawyers, reporters, cops, laborers, janitors, simple housewives, an exotic dancer; most of them asked us not to use their names. From time to time we checked in at the Midlothian Mirror to compare notes with Penn Jones. Occasionally he would take us to his "farm" a few miles away, where he keeps his collection of barbed wire, and where he has installed a waterwheel to irrigate the hilltop ("the only working waterwheel in Ellis County," Jones boasts). Once we were sitting in that bucolic setting, discussing the gory details of this grisliest of murder cases, when all at once the incongruity struck us as enormously funny—the barbed wire collection, Lyndon Johnson, the "Texas Mafia," the waterwheel, the mysterious deaths, the Grassy Knoll, the presumptuousness of our investigating a regicide—and we threw our heads back, broken up with laughter. Penn, who has a formidable cackle, laughed the hardest. You have to laugh on this case, or you can begin to doubt your sanity.

On another trip, we stood up and talked for 15 minutes with Bertha Cheek, a friend of Ruby's and sister of the lady who kept Oswald's rooming house, while she was explaining why she couldn't grant us an interview—unless we paid her $1000. "Marina Oswald is getting money for her story," said sexy, fortyish Bertha, a prosperous realtor. "Why should I give mine away?"

We spent six hours over vodka and orange juice with Wanda Joyce Killam, a former B-girl in Ruby's Carousel Club and widow of one of the mysteriously dead. Wanda, an attractive bottle blonde, looked a bit frowzy, not expecting visitors, and was embarrassed about it. She rambled on about how wonderful a guy Jack Ruby is and some minor details about her murdered husband; but nothing startling, nothing we did not already know. We bid a cordial goodbye to Wanda, who is a warm, gregarious person, and talked about the apprehension that chilled her features during most of our visit. But by this time we had grown suspicious of anyone who *wasn't* afraid.

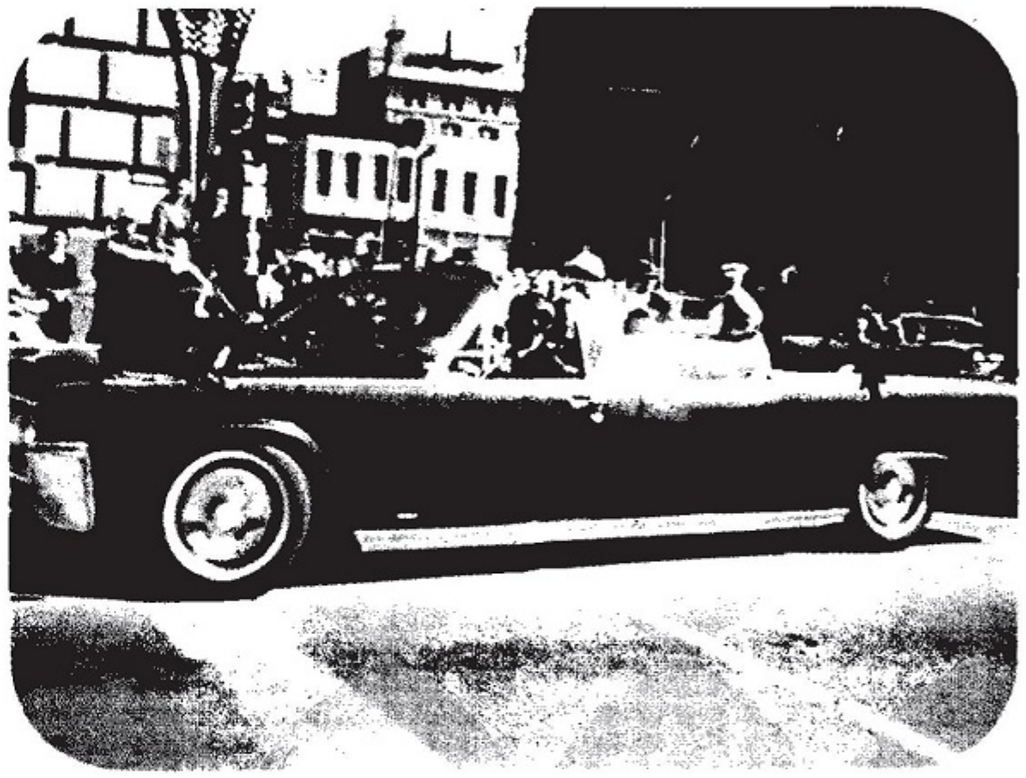
Three years after the Kennedy assassination—and two years after it was allegedly "solved" by the President's Commission—fear still walks with the man or woman who knows even part of the truth of what really happened on November 22, 1963. If Penn Jones has done nothing else, he has shown us that. It is a fear beyond the ken of most Americans, who know only the ever-present, constipating fear of being honest and natural with one another. The Dallas fear is a fear for life, and livelihood. We saw it in the eyes of those who crossed paths with key figures in the assassination. We heard it in their voices. "Please," one of Jack Ruby's strippers told us. "Don't put my name in your paper. Please. I love life too much."

More than all the persuasive and well-documented books on the subject, it was that fear that reached us, in our intestines; convinced us the Warren Commission was wrong. If Lee Harvey Oswald did the job all by himself, then what are these people afraid of? *Whom* are they afraid of?

The Kennedy "Curse"

PENN JONES' biggest reportorial coup is unquestionably his discovery of a series of mysterious deaths, possibly related to the assassination of the President. That he would print it, when practically nobody was printing anything but kudos for Earl Warren & Co., and print it *in the Dallas area*, is a sign of hope for the survival of independent journalism.

Jones' first scoop was the story of a meeting at Jack Ruby's apartment on Sunday, November 24, 1963, several hours after Ruby shot and killed Oswald in Dallas



police headquarters. In his original editorial, reprinted on page 32, he disclosed that three of the five present at the meeting—Jim Koethe, Bill Hunter and Tom Howard—have died mysterious deaths. Of the survivors, Jim Martin, who curiously enough represented the accused killer of Koethe and got him off without prosecution, is still practicing law in Dallas. George Senator, at this writing, is living in upstate New York. He has said repeatedly that he fears for his life.

These were not the only ones to have died mysteriously who possessed crucial scraps of knowledge about the killings of President Kennedy, Officer J. D. Tippit or Lee Harvey Oswald. At least 10 such persons are known to have been murdered, to have committed suicide or died in suspicious circumstances since the Kennedy assassination. Scores of persons similarly knowledgeable have been beaten, shot, threatened, intimidated or run out of town. And at least a dozen others brushed by the event have voluntarily left Dallas—quite sensibly, it would seem.

[JIM KOETHE—KARATE CHOP]

THE BODY of the young Dallas reporter was found swathed in a blanket on the floor of his bachelor apartment on September 21, 1964. Police said the cause of death was asphyxiation from a broken bone at the base of the neck—apparently the result of a karate chop.

Robbery appeared to be the motive, although Koethe's parents believe he was killed for other reasons. Whoever ransacked his apartment, they point out, was careful to remove his notes for a book he was preparing, in collaboration with two other journalists, on the Kennedy assassination.

Within a week a 22-year-old ex-con from Alabama named Larry Earl Reno was picked up selling Koethe's personal effects and held on suspicion of murder.

Reno's lawyers were Mike Barclay and the ubiquitous Jim Martin, both friends of Ruby roomie George Senator. Martin and Senator, one recalls, were with Koethe at that enigmatic meeting on November 24, 1963. When the Reno case came before the grand jury, District Attorney Henry Wade secretly instructed the jurors not to indict—an extraordinary move for a chief prosecuting officer with as strong a case as he had. The grand jury returned a no-bill.

Reno, however, remained in jail on a previous charge. When they finally sprang him, in January 1965, he was rearrested within a month for the robbery of a hotel. This time the prosecution, led by a one-time law partner of Martin's, had no qualms about getting an indictment, and a conviction. Reno was sentenced to life for the hotel robbery. At the trial his lawyers called no witnesses in his defense.

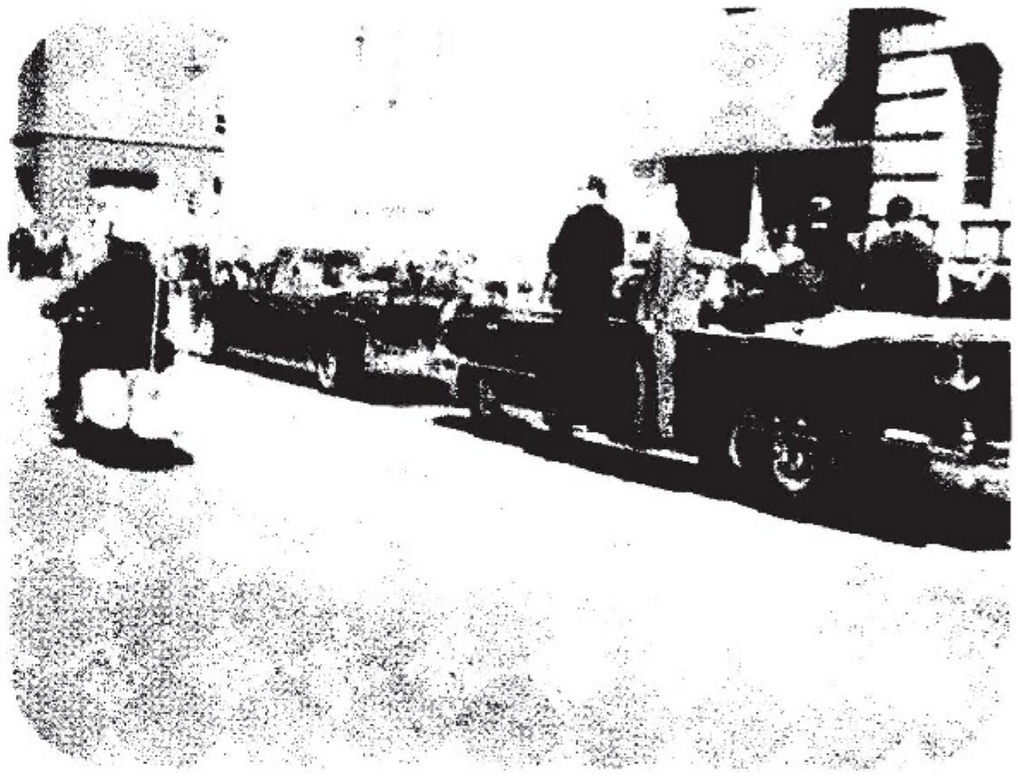
[BILL HUNTER—SHOT DEAD]

HUNTER COVERED the Kennedy assassination more or less on a lark. He was a police reporter for the Long Beach paper and a good one, with a knack for getting along with cops. He drank with them, played cards with them in the press room—he was a sharp and lucky player—and they would often call him at home when a story broke. Hunter was a big man, described by friends as rough, jovial, "very physical," with an attractive wife and three children.

There was no real need for the Long Beach paper to send a reporter to Dallas, but Hunter, who grew up there, managed to promote a free trip for himself with the city desk. In Dallas he ran into Jim Koethe, with whom he had worked in Wichita Falls, Texas. Koethe asked him to come along to the meeting in Ruby's apartment; they arrived to find Senator and Tom Howard having a drink.

Bill Hunter was killed just after midnight on the morning of April 23, 1964—only a few hours after George Senator testified before Warren Commission counsel that he "could not recall" the meeting in Ruby's apartment. Hunter was seated at his desk in the press room of the Long Beach public safety building when detective Creighton Wiggins Jr. and his partner burst into the room. A single bullet fired from Wiggins' gun struck Hunter in the heart, killing him almost instantly. The mystery novel he was reading, entitled *Stop This Man!*, slipped blood-spattered from his fingers.

Wiggins' story underwent several changes. His final version was that he and his partner had been playing cops and robbers with guns drawn when his gun started to slip from his hand and went off. The two officers were convicted of involuntary manslaughter. Sentence was suspended. There were so many contradictions in Wiggins' testimony that Bill Shelton, Hunter's city editor and old friend from Texas, is "still not satisfied" with the official verdict. He declines to comment about any possible



connection between Hunter's death and the Kennedy assassination. "But I'd believe anything," he says. It is a curious footnote that Shelton's brother Keith was among the majority of Dallas newspapermen who found it expedient to leave their jobs after covering the assassination. Keith was president of the Dallas Press Club and gave up a promising career as political columnist for the Times-Herald to settle in a small north Texas town. One reporter who was asked to resign put it this way: "It looks like a studied effort to remove all the knowledgeable newsmen who covered the assassination."

[TOM HOWARD—HEART ATTACK]

ALTHOUGH DALLAS, like any other American city, is slowly being taken over by the well-groomed, image-conscious wonders rolling off our college assembly lines, there is still a lingering appreciation for the "characters"—the Bob Thorntons,

the Jack Rubys, the Tom Howards—throwbacks to another age when the Old West values reigned supreme. Everyone around official Dallas knew Tom Howard, that familiar figure in the white Stetson who always seemed to show up where the action was. He was a defense attorney in the old rough-and-tumble Texas fashion, operating out of a store-front office, devoid of the usual law books, across from police headquarters. During his career he handled about 50 murder cases, and was more than once cited for contempt of court for fist fights and shouting matches with the prosecution.

Howard was a friend of District Attorney Henry Wade, although they often opposed each other in court, and it was not uncommon for them to meet for a sociable drink after court adjourned. He was also close to Ruby and others on the fringes of the Dallas underworld.

Like Jack Ruby, Howard's life revolved around the police station, and it was not surprising when he and Ruby (toting his gun) showed up at the station on the evening of the assassination. Nor was it unusual when Howard arrived there shortly after Ruby shot Oswald, two days later, asking to see his old friend.

Howard was shown into a meeting room to see a bewildered Ruby, who had not asked for any lawyer, and for the next few days—until Ruby's brother Earl soured on Howard and had him relieved—he was Jack's chief attorney and public spokesman. Howard took to the publicity with alacrity, called a press conference, wheeled and dealed. He told newsmen the case was a "once-in-a-lifetime chance" and that "speaking as a private citizen," he thought Ruby deserved a congressional medal. He told the Houston Post that Ruby had been in the police station Friday night with a gun. He dickered with a national magazine about an Oswald-murder story. He got hold of a picture showing the President's brains flying and tried to sell it to Life. Ruby's sister even accused him of leaking information to the DA. All told, it was never quite clear whether Howard was working for Ruby or against him.

Howard met frequently with his client in the days immediately following the death of Oswald. From this, along with his ties with both police and hoodlum circles in Dallas, and his presence at the Ruby-Senator apartment meeting that fateful Sunday, one would assume he was the repository of a wealth of privileged information about the events of November 1963. And we know he was an irrepressible talker, privy to the intrigues of petty criminality but hardly one to be trusted with any secrets surrounding the Kennedy assassination.

On March 27, 1965, Howard was taken to the hospital by an unidentified person and died there. He was 48. The doctor, without benefit of an autopsy, said he had suffered a heart attack. Some reporter friends of Howard's are not so sure. They observed that for three days before his death, the normally gregarious Howard seemed preoccupied and uncommunicative, and did not appear to recognize friends. One Dallas reporter says flatly that Howard was bumped off; others are more circumspect. "As far as I'm concerned the case is closed," one of them says. "You're not going to catch me messing in that hornet's nest."

[EARLENE ROBERTS—HEART ATTACK]

MRS. ROBERTS, the plump widow who managed the rooming house where Oswald was living under the name O. H. Lee, was one of the key witnesses before the Warren Commission. She testified that "around 1 o'clock, or maybe a little after" on November 22, Oswald rushed into the rooming house, stayed in his room for "not over 3 or 4 minutes" and walked out zipping on a light-weight

jacket. The last she saw of him he was waiting at a nearby bus stop. A few minutes later, one mile away, Officer Tippit was shot dead; Oswald was accused of the crime.

Mrs. Roberts also testified that during the brief time Oswald was in his room, a police car with two uniformed cops in it pulled up in front of the rooming house, and that she did not recognize either the car or the policemen. She heard the horn honk, "just kind of 'tit-tit'—twice," and after a moment saw the police car move off down the street. Moments later Oswald left the house.

The police department issued a report saying all patrol cars in the area (except Officer Tippit's) were accounted for. The Warren Commission let it go at that. It did not seek to resolve the question: what were policemen doing honking the horn outside Oswald's rooming house 30 minutes after a Presidential assassination? Their swift departure would indicate they certainly were not coming to apprehend him. It is perhaps too far fetched to imagine that they were giving Oswald some kind of signal, al-

though it seems as plausible as any other explanation of this bizarre incident.

After testifying in Dallas in April of 1964, Mrs. Roberts was subjected to intensive police harassment. They visited her at all hours of the day and night, contacted her employers and identified her as the Oswald rooming house lady. As a result she was dismissed from three housekeeping and nursing jobs in April, May and June of 1964 alone; no telling how many jobs she lost after that. Relatives report that right up until her death a year and a half later, Earlene complained of being "worried to death" by the police.

Mrs. Roberts died January 9, 1966, in Parkland Hospital. Police said she suffered a heart attack in her home. No autopsy was performed.

[NANCY JANE MOONEY—HANGED]

WARREN REYNOLDS was just minding his used car lot on East Jefferson when he heard the shots two blocks away. He thought it was probably somebody's marital quarrel. Then he saw a man having great difficulty tucking "a pistol or an automatic" in his belt and running at the same time. Reynolds gave chase for a short piece, being careful to keep his distance, then lost the fleeing man. He didn't know it then, but he had apparently witnessed the flight of the killer (or one of the killers) of Patrolman Jefferson Davis Tippit. Feeling helpful, he gave his name to a passing policeman and offered his cooperation. TV cameras zeroed in on him, got his story. Warren Reynolds, the amiable used car man, was making history.

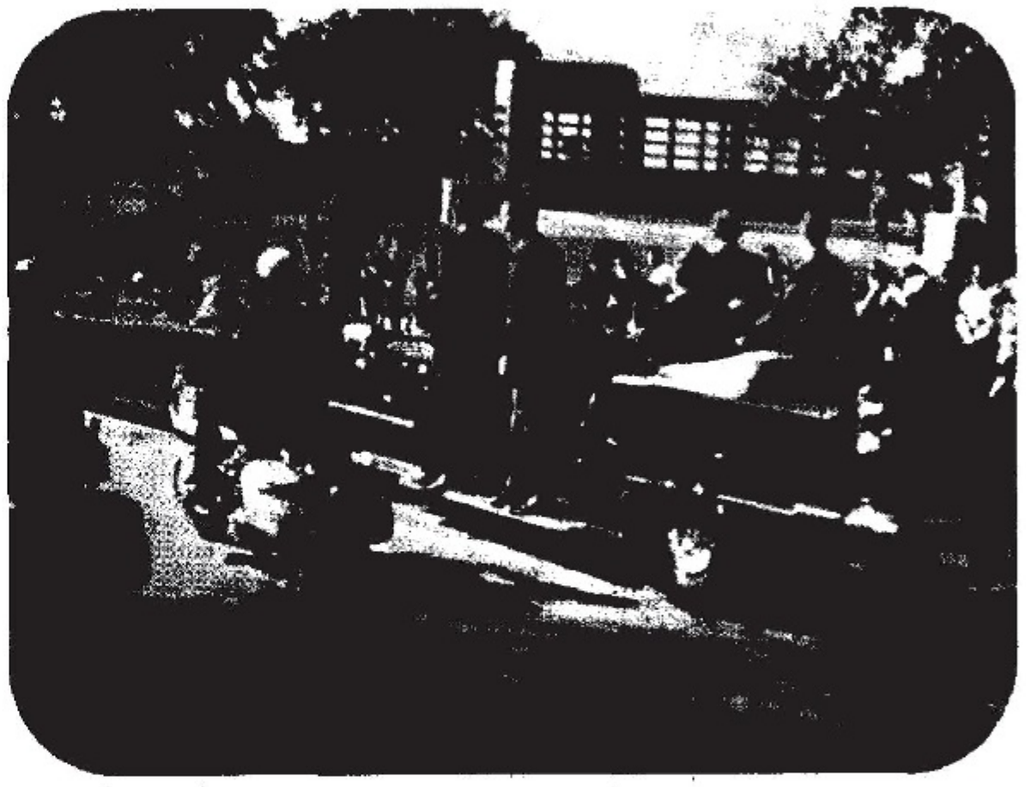
But in one of those curious oversights which riddle the Kennedy-Oswald-Tippit investigation, Reynolds was not questioned by any police agency until two months after the event. When the FBI finally talked to him on January 21, 1964, the agent's report of the interview said: ". . . he would hesitate to definitely identify Oswald as the individual." The FBI report added, however, in most unpolicemanlike fashion: "He advised he is of the opinion Oswald is the person. . . ."

Two days after talking to the FBI, Reynolds was shot in the head as he was closing up the car lot for the night; nothing was stolen. Later, after consulting at length with retired General Edwin Walker, he told Warren Commission counsel that Oswald definitely was the man he saw fleeing the Tippit murder scene.

A young hood named Darrell Wayne Garner was arrested for the murder attempt. He had made a long distance call to a relative and in some drunken bragging, admitted shooting Reynolds. But Garner had an alibi, and her name was Nancy Jane Mooney, alias Betty McDonald, who used to take her clothes off to music in Jack Ruby's Carousel Club. Garner was freed.

Nancy Jane, a mother of four, was picked up about a week later—for fighting with a girlfriend, over a man—and jailed on a disturbing-the-peace rap. The girlfriend was not arrested. Within a few hours Miss Mooney was dead. Police said she hanged herself with her toreador pants, in her private cell at the Dallas City jail.

Garner was free, his alibi witness was dead, and Reynolds was going to pieces out of fear. A week after Nancy Jane was hanged, someone unscrewed a light globe on Reynolds' front porch; it was clearly deliberate because some screws had to be removed to get at the globe. And the same week a man stopped Reynolds' nine-year-old daughter as she was walking home from school and offered her money to get in his car. Fortunately she had the presence of mind to run like hell. Through all this, Reynolds had the distinct impression he was being intimidated. Today, after giving the Commission a firm identification of Oswald as the Tippit fugitive, he is breathing easier. "I don't think they're going to bother me any more," he said.



[HANK KILLAM—THROAT SLIT]

HOUSEPAINTER HANK KILLAM was 6′ 3″ and weighed 250 pounds—"a big hunk of man," said his wife Wanda, who used to push cigarettes and drink with the customers at Jack Ruby's club.

Hank and Wanda were good friends of John Carter, another painter, who lived at Mrs. A. C. Johnson's rooming house at the same time Lee Harvey Oswald lived there. Carter worked several painting jobs with Hank and used to visit at the Killam home.

To all appearances, his wife's 15-year association with Ruby and his friendship with John Carter, Oswald's

fellow boarder, were Killam's only tenuous links to the Kennedy assassination. For all that, he was inordinately interesting to the "federal agents" who visited him repeatedly after the assassination, causing him to lose one job after another. In addition to questions about Killam's connections and whereabouts at the time of the assassination, the interrogators were especially interested in his political views; Killam said he had none.

Certainly Killam was most absorbed by the assassination, even obsessed. A few hours after the event he came home "white as a sheet," Wanda said, and stayed up all night watching television accounts of the assassination. He bought all the papers and diligently clipped the stories about Kennedy's death.

Just before Christmas, Killam packed up and left for Florida, where he had family, taking his assassination clipping files with him. But the "agents" got to Wanda. "They browbeat me into telling where he was," Wanda said. "I guess I'm just a girl that finds it very hard to say no to people."

Hank got a job in Tampa, selling cars at his brother-in-law's lot. Again the "federal police" hounded him, visiting the car lot so often that even his brother-in-law was persuaded to let him go. They harassed his second Tampa employer as well, until he lost that job too.

In mid-March he called Wanda in Dallas to say he had a new job lined up and would be sending for her soon. "I was all excited," said Wanda, "because I loved that man." Then in the early morning hours on St. Patrick's Day 1964, Killam received a phone call at his mother's home. Immediately he left the house. Not long afterward they found him on a sidewalk, in front of a broken plate glass window, his jugular vein cut. He bled to death en route to the hospital. His wallet and diamond ring were missing.

It is not clear whether the "federal police" who visited Hank and Wanda were in fact FBI men, or whether they ever properly identified themselves as such. If the FBI did interview Killam, there is no indication in the 26 volumes or the Warren Report. A check of the index to Commission documents in the National Archives reveals no mention of Killam. But then a number of FBI documents relating to the assassination are withheld, along with most of the documents prepared by the CIA. What is clear is that *somebody* considered Hank Killam a very important guy.

[WILLIAM WHALEY—HEAD-ON COLLISION]

WHALEY WAS THE OSWALD CABBIE, one of the few who had the opportunity to talk alone with the accused killer of Kennedy between the assassination and Oswald's arrest. He testified that Oswald hailed his cab at the Greyhound bus station, then graciously offered the cab to a waiting lady, who declined his offer. Whaley said he drove Oswald to the intersection of Beckley and Neches—half a block from the rooming house—and collected a dollar. Later he identified Oswald as his fare in a questionable police lineup, although police records are confused and he may have picked out another man.

Whaley was killed in a head-on collision on a bridge over the Trinity River, December 18, 1965; his passenger was critically injured. The 83-year-old driver of the other car was also killed. Whaley had been with the City Transportation Co. since 1936 and had a perfect accident record. He was the first Dallas cabbie to be killed on duty since 1937. When Penn Jones went to interview the general manager of the cab company about Whaley's death, he was literally pushed out of the office. "If you're smart," said the manager, "you won't be coming around here asking questions."

[EDWARD BENAVIDES—SHOT DEAD]

DOMINGO BENAVIDES, a dark, slim auto mechanic, was a witness to the murder of Officer Tippit who testified that he "really got a good view" of the slayer. He was not asked to see the police lineup in which Oswald appeared. Although he later said the killer resembled newspaper pictures of Oswald, he described the man differently: "I remember the back of his head seemed like his hairline sort of went square instead of tapered off . . . it kind of went down and squared off and made his head look flat in back." Domingo reports he has been repeatedly threatened by police, and advised not to talk about what he saw.

In mid-February 1964 his brother Eddy, who resembled him, was fatally shot in the back of the head in a beer joint on Second Avenue in Dallas. Police said it was a pistol shot, wrote up a cursory report and marked the case "unsolved."

Domingo's father-in-law, J. W. Jackson, was so unimpressed with the police investigation of Eddy's death that he launched a little inquiry of his own. Two weeks later Jackson was shot at in his home. The assailant secreted himself in the carport, fired once into the house, and when Jackson ran outside, fired one more time, just missing his head. As the gunman clambered into an automobile in a nearby driveway, Jackson saw a police car coming down the block. The officer made no attempt to follow the gunman's speeding car; instead, he stopped at Jackson's house and spent a long time inquiring what had happened. Later a police lieutenant advised Jackson, "You'd better lay off of this business. Don't go around asking questions; that's our job." Jackson and Domingo are both convinced that Eddy's murder was a case of mistaken identity and that Domingo, the Tippit witness, was the intended victim.

[DOROTHY KILGALLEN ?]

WE KNOW of no serious person who really believes that the death of Dorothy Kilgallen, the gossip columnist, was related to the Kennedy assassination. Still, she was passionately interested in the case, told friends she firmly believed there was a conspiracy and that she would find out the truth if it took her all her life.

Miss Kilgallen was the first to make public the existence of Acquilla Clemons, a witness to the Tippit killing whose name does not appear once in the Warren Report or volumes. She was also the only reporter ever to interview Jack Ruby privately since the killing of Oswald. During the Ruby trial, which she covered for the now defunct New York Journal-American, Judge Joe B. Brown granted her 30 minutes alone with Ruby in the judge's chambers; the other reporters were furious.

One of the biggest scoops of Miss Kilgallen's career came when she pirated the transcript of Ruby's testimony before the Warren Commission and ran it in the Journal-American. Thousands of New Yorkers were shocked at the hopelessly inept questioning of Ruby by Chief Justice Warren, by Warren's almost deliberate failure to follow up the leads Ruby was feeding him.

Miss Kilgallen died in her bed on November 8, 1965. Dr. James Luke, a New York City medical examiner, said the cause of death was "acute barbiturate and alcohol intoxication, circumstances undetermined." Dr. Luke said there were not high enough levels of either alcohol or barbiturates to have caused death, but that the two are "additive" and together are quite enough to kill. This cause of death, he observed, is not at all uncommon. Was it suicide? Accident? Murder?—Dr. Luke said there was no way of determining that.

As we say, Dorothy Kilgallen probably does not belong on any list of Kennedy-related deaths. But questions do remain. An editor of Screen Stars magazine, Mary Brannum, says she received a phone call a few hours *before* Dorothy's body was discovered, announcing that she had been murdered. Miss Kilgallen's "What's My Line" make-up man said that shortly before her death she vowed she would "crack this case." And another New York show biz friend said Dorothy told him in the last days of her life: "In five more days I'm going to bust this case wide open."

[LEE BOWERS—AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT]

LEE BOWERS' TESTIMONY is perhaps as explosive as any recorded by the Warren Commission. He was one of 65 known witnesses to the President's assassination who thought shots were fired from the area of the Grassy Knoll. (The Knoll is west of the

Texas School Book Depository.) But more than that, he was in a unique position to observe some pretty strange behavior in the Knoll area during and immediately before the assassination.

Bowers, then a towerman for the Union Terminal Co., was stationed in his 14-foot tower directly behind the Grassy Knoll. As he faced the assassination site, he could see the railroad overpass to his right front. Directly in front of him was a parking lot, and then a wooden stockade fence and a row of trees running along the top of the Grassy Knoll. The Knoll sloped down to the spot on Elm Street where Kennedy was killed. Police had "cut off" traffic into the parking area, Bowers said, "so that anyone moving around could actually be observed."

Bowers made two significant observations which he revealed to the Commission. First, he saw three unfamiliar cars slowly cruising around the parking area in the 35 minutes before the assassination; the first two left after a few minutes. The driver of the second car appeared to be

talking into "a mike or a telephone"—"he was holding something up to his mouth with one hand and he was driving with the other." A third car, with out-of-state plates and mud up to the windows, probed all around the parking area. Bowers last remembered seeing it about eight minutes before the shooting, pausing "just above the assassination site." He gave detailed descriptions of the cars and their drivers.

Bowers also observed two unfamiliar men standing on top of the Knoll at the edge of the parking lot, within 10 or 15 feet of each other—"one man, middle-aged or slightly older, fairly heavy-set, in a white shirt, fairly dark trousers. Another younger man, about mid-twenties, in either a plaid shirt or a plaid coat or jacket." Both were facing toward Elm and Houston, where the motorcade would be coming from. They were the only strangers he remembered seeing. His description shows a remarkable similarity to Julia Ann Mercer's description of two unidentified men climbing the Knoll (see Jones' editorial, p. 38).

When the shots rang out, Bowers' attention was drawn to the area where he had seen the two men; he could still make out the one in the white shirt—"the darker dressed man was too hard to distinguish from the trees." He observed "some commotion" at that spot, ". . . something out of the ordinary, a sort of milling around . . . which attracted my eye for some reason, which I could not identify." At that moment, he testified, a motorcycle policeman left the Presidential motorcade and roared up the Grassy Knoll straight to where the two mysterious gentlemen were standing behind the fence. The policeman dismounted, Bowers recalled, then after a moment climbed on his motorcycle and drove off. Later, in a film interview with attorney Mark Lane, he explained that the "commotion" that caught his eye may have been "a flash of light or smoke." His information dovetails with what other witnesses observed from different vantage points.

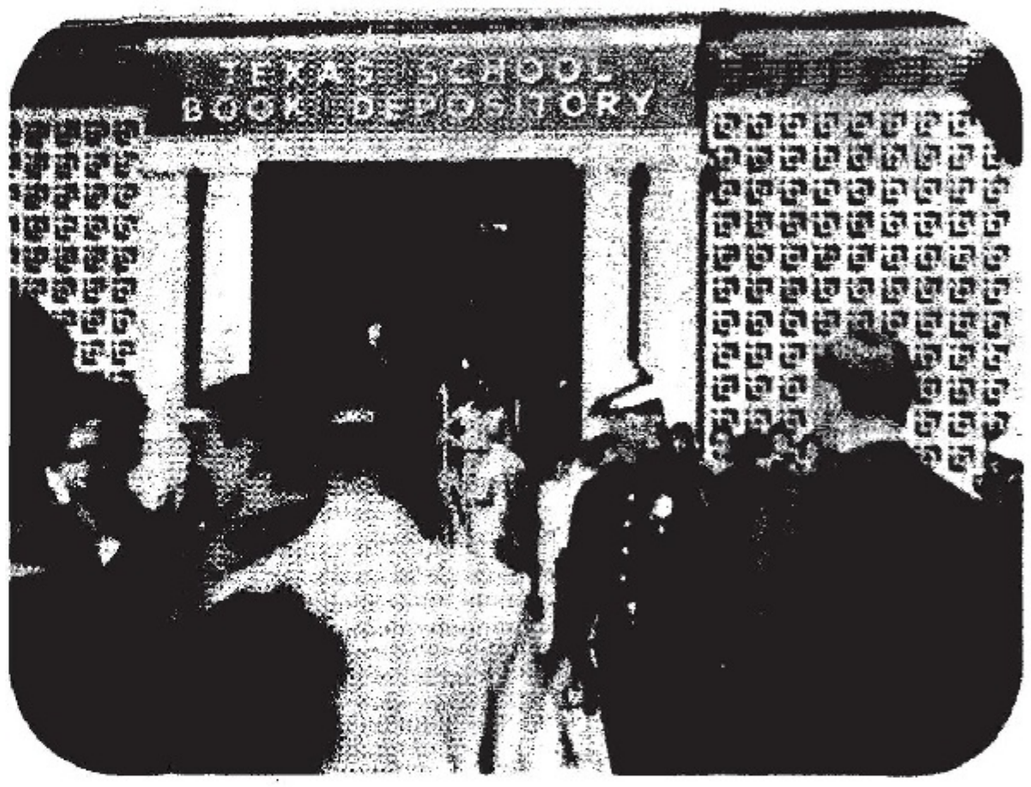
On the morning of August 9, 1966, Lee Bowers, now the vice-president of a construction firm, was driving south from Dallas on business. He was two miles from Midlothian when his brand new company car veered from the road and hit a bridge abutment. A farmer who saw it said the car was going 50 miles an hour, a slow speed for that road. There were no skidmarks to indicate braking.

Bowers died of his wounds at 1 p.m. in a Dallas hospital. He was 41. There was no autopsy, and he was cremated soon afterward. Doctors saw no evidence that he had suffered a heart attack. A doctor from Midlothian, who rode in the ambulance with Bowers, noticed something peculiar about the victim. "He was in a strange state of shock," the old doctor said, "a different kind of shock than an accident victim experiences. I can't explain it. I've never seen anything like it."

Bowers' widow at first insisted to Penn Jones that there was nothing suspicious about her husband's death. Then she became flustered and said: "They told him not to talk."

"Warren's in Trouble"

DALLAS IS A CLOSE-MOUTHED place. Without question it is a city that feels uncomfortable about all the bad publicity it has been receiving. And it patently doesn't like all these foreigners poking around, interviewing witnesses, dredging up more dirt about Dallas. Still, there are so many cases of obvious intimidation of witnesses that it appears to amount to more than an acute case of hypersensitivity. One notes that all of the mysteriously dead, with the exception of Bowers, had some association with Ruby or with the murder of Patrolman Tippit; many of the intimidations seem to fall into a similar pattern.



Wilma Tice, a Dallas housewife, told the FBI she saw Jack Ruby at Parkland Hospital right after the assassination, when he was supposed to have been elsewhere. Her observation was confirmed by Seth Kantor, a White House newsman and ex-Dallas reporter who knew Ruby well and said he talked with him at the hospital. Mrs. Tice received threatening phone calls—"it would pay you to keep your mouth shut"—and once while her husband was at work, a ladder was found wedged against her door so it could not be opened.

Little Lynn, alias Karen Bennett Carlin, a plumpish 19-year-old stripper at the Carousel, told the Secret Service she heard another Ruby entertainer say he'd seen Oswald at Ruby's club, and she "vaguely remembered" seeing Oswald there herself. She was also "under the impression" that Oswald, Ruby and other individuals unknown to her were involved in a plot to assassinate President Kennedy, and that she would be killed if she gave

any information to the authorities. Later in the Secret Service interview she became scared, changed her story and denied any knowledge of a plot. She continued to assert, however, that her life had twice been threatened.

Harold Richard Williams was working as a chef at the Mikado, a Dallas bottle club, when it was raided in early November 1963. One of the arresting officers, he said, was J. D. Tippit, and seated next to him in the cop car—"so close you'd think they were lovers"—was Jack Ruby. Williams told attorney Mark Lane he knew Ruby, who "used to furnish us with girls," and got a long look at Tippit. But Harold Williams did not follow the example of the other six known witnesses to a Ruby-Tippit association; he continued to shoot off his mouth about it. Williams said the police talked to him in December 1963 and advised him that he had not seen Ruby with Tippit.

THE MOST CONSISTENT of the seeming patterns of intimidation involves those who knew something about the murder of Jefferson Davis Tippit. Shirley Martin of Hominy, Oklahoma, who has been repeatedly tailed by Dallas police, is not the only independent investigator to have noticed unusual "heat" when checking out details of the Tippit killing. Earlier this year Mark Lane located Domingo Benavides, a witness to the shooting whose brother was mysteriously killed (see above), and arranged to meet him at Lane's motel for a filmed interview the next morning; Lane offered him $100. That night two men from the homicide squad came to the motel and inquired of Lane's film crew why they were so interested in Benavides. "What did you offer our boy $100 for?" they asked. According to the film crew, the policemen knew the exact time of Benavides' appointment with Lane, implied Benavides would not be there, and generally showed a great deal more concern about their footage on the Tippit murder than about the killing of Kennedy. Benavides never showed up.

Another witness to the Tippit killing, a nurse named Acquilla Clemons who described the slayer as short and stocky and said he fled with a tall, lanky man wearing khaki trousers—neither of whom resembled Oswald—has been repeatedly threatened. According to Mark Lane she was visited a few days after the event by a gun-toting man: "He just told me it'd be best if I didn't say anything because I might get hurt." She said several policemen came to see her after that, and one expressed hope that she would not be killed on the way to work.

We have hardly begun to describe the intimidation to which important witnesses have been subjected. Enough evidence is in to justify an immediate investigation. We want to know *why* people in Dallas seem so intent on keeping the truth about Ruby and Tippit from getting out.

[TIPPIT]

THE TIPPIT KILLING WAS NEVER conclusively "solved" by the Warren Commission. The gross faults in its chain of evidence pointing to Oswald as the lone cop-killer have been exposed in several recent books; we won't go into it here. Certainly, the Commission did not adequately investigate Tippit's movements prior to his death, or the curious presence near the scene of off-duty Patrolman Olsen, a close associate of Jack Ruby's (see Penn Jones' story on Olsen above).

On Bill Turner's last whirlwind trip to Dallas—acting on a tip from "sleuth" David Lifton—he uncovered five witnesses to Tippit's whereabouts in the last minutes of his life. There is no indication that the Commission or any police agency was even aware of them. Photographer Al Volkland and his wife Lou, both of whom knew Tippit, said that 15 or 20 minutes after the assassination they saw

him at a gas station and waved to him. They observed Tippit sitting in his police car at a Gloco gas station in Oak Cliff, watching the cars coming over the Houston Street viaduct from downtown Dallas. Three employees of the Gloco station, Tom Mullins, Emmett Hollingshead and J. B. "Shorty" Lewis, all of whom knew Tippit, confirmed the Volklands' story. They said Tippit stayed at the station for "about 10 minutes, somewhere between 12:45 and 1:00, then he went tearing off down Lancaster at high speed"—on a bee-line toward Jack Ruby's apartment and in the direction of where he was killed a few minutes later.

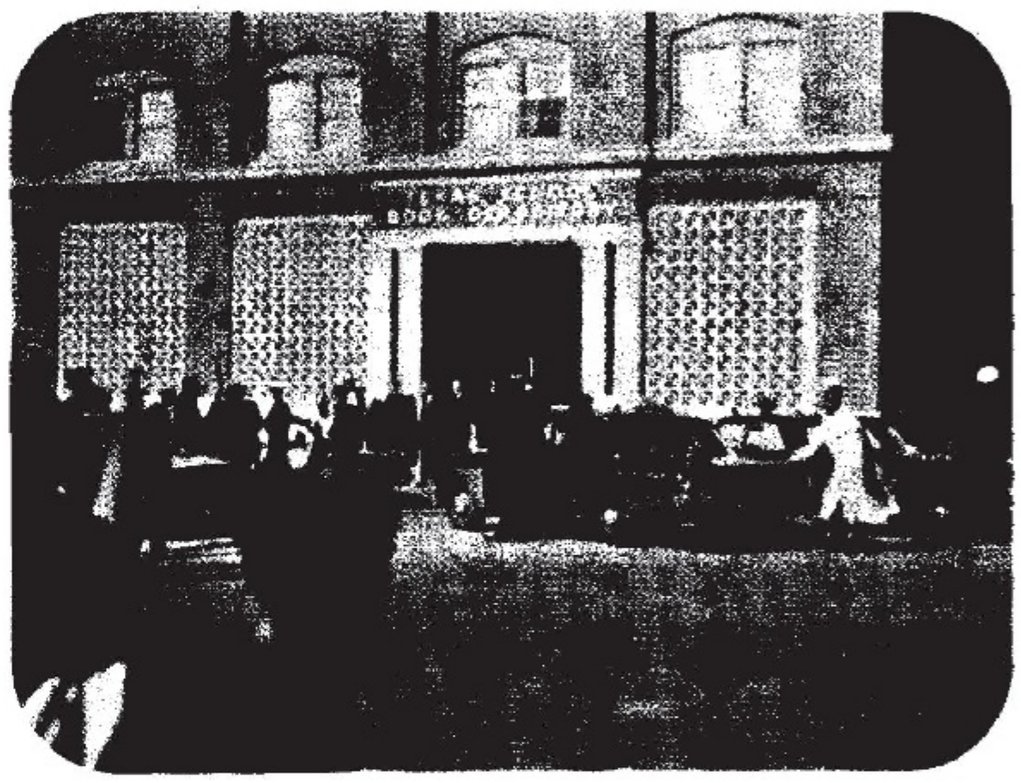
What could Tippit have heard or seen to cause him to leave his observation post at the Gloco station and roar up the street? Police radio logs show no instructions to move. We know that cabdriver Whaley said he drove Oswald across the Houston Street viaduct (past the Gloco station at the same time Tippit was reported there) to a spot near the rooming house. Is it possible that Tippit spotted Oswald in the cab, recognized him, and for some

reason took off to intercept him? If we recall that while Oswald was in the rooming house, Earlene Roberts observed a police car pull up in front and honk the horn, and the police statement that all cars in the area were accounted for—except Tippit's—then it is possible indeed. Earlene, who was blind in one eye and whose sight was failing in the other, said she thought the number on the car was 107; Tippit's car number was 10. Earlene said she saw two policemen in the car; all patrol cars in the area that day were one-man cars and Earlene, with her poor vision, may have mistaken Tippit's uniform jacket, hanging on a coat-hanger in his car, for another cop. The Commission should at least have investigated the possibility.

It is scandalous that three years after the event we should be reduced to this sort of speculation; that Turner, in one quick trip to Dallas, could learn more about Tippit's movements before his death than the combined investigative resources of the police, FBI and Warren Commission.

Even the evidence the Commission did have was scrutinized in the most perfunctory way. Tippit's last known radio transmission, for example, was at 12:54, when he reported his position at Lancaster and 8th. But at 1:08, the approximate time of the shooting according to at least one witness, the dispatcher received two garbled transmissions from a patrol car. The FBI interpreted them as coming from 58 and 488, although no such call numbers are known to have been in service. Dallas police thought they came from 78—Tippit. Yet no one made any attempt to de-garble the transmissions, despite the existence of "voice-printing" techniques capable of reconstructing garbled transmissions phonetically. Provided the tapes have not been destroyed, it is *still* possible to voice-print those transmissions. They may provide a key to the mystery of Tippit's death.

The Commission even refused to take the testimony of Governor Connally seriously, although it was supported by a preponderance of evidence. Connally and his wife both testified that they were positive that the governor was hit by a second shot, and that the first and third shots had struck the President. But the Commission had its own theory, the "superbullet" theory, and the Connallys' positive recollection just didn't fit. The Commission's theory held that a bullet (Exhibit 399), found under a stretcher mat in the unguarded basement of Parkland Hospital had pierced President Kennedy's neck from the rear on a downward trajectory, entered Connally's back, shattered the fifth rib, emerged from his chest, broke his wrist into pieces, leaving fragments, entered his thigh, leaving fragments, and then fell out, somehow becoming wedged in a stretcher (never established to have been Connally's), beautifully whole and undeformed, without even a recognizable trace of blood or tissue on its surface. Unbelievable?—perhaps; but because both Kennedy and Connally were hit from the rear in less time than it takes to fire Oswald's bolt-action rifle twice, the Commission *had* to have a "superbullet" theory. Otherwise there would have had to be two assassins firing from the rear (not to mention anyone firing from the front), or, conceivably, one assassin other than Oswald firing from the rear with an automatic weapon. And this possibility, to the Commission, was inadmissible.



Before the Commission discredited Connally's testimony they should at least have heard all the important witnesses. Ramparts found one the Commission never talked to; they never even asked him for an affidavit. He is William Stinson, an aide to Governor Connally at the time of the assassination. Today, although officially employed by the Veterans Administration, he has an office in the White House. Stinson told us he was in the operating room, wearing a sterile uniform, when the doctors operated on Connally at Parkland Hospital. "The last thing

[THE OVERLOOKED EVIDENCE]

WE EMBARKED on our limited investigation to get a story, not to solve the case. We are not cops, God knows. But we came across so much overlooked evidence that we can't help but wonder if the Warren Commission was set up to do anything but allay public fears of a conspiracy. Witnesses who supported its Oswald-lone-assassin-and-cop-killer theory, like Helen Markham, Howard Brennan and Marina Oswald, were coddled and the discrepancies in their hopelessly confused testimony ignored. Witnesses who told a different story, like Jean Hill and Patrick Dean, were impugned and browbeaten; Commission counsel openly accused police sergeant Dean of testifying falsely and of falsifying his reports to the chief of police.

they did," said Stinson, "was to remove the bullet from the governor's thigh—because that was the least thing that was wrong with him."

It was a startling disclosure. For if a bullet was embedded in Connally's thigh, then "Bullet 399" could not have done the herculean task it is credited with, and the Commission's theory of what happened on November 22 is knocked into a cocked hat. Intrigued, we contacted Dr. Charles Baxter, who assisted in the operation on Connally's thigh. He told us that bullet fragments, not an entire bullet, had been removed from the thigh—itself a startling revelation, and a fact the Commission either never bothered to find out or deliberately ignored. Even with these fragments removed, autopsy doctor Humes said the x-rays showed too much metal remaining in Connally's thighbone to have been caused by Bullet 399. Dr. Robert Shaw, finding "more than 3 grains of metal" in the governor's wrist, and finding Bullet 399 to have lost "literally none of its substance," joined autopsy doctors Humes and Finck in concluding: Bullet 399 *could not* have caused all of Connally's wounds.

What went on at Parkland Hospital? Why wasn't Stinson called to testify? Why was Baxter, who did testify, never asked about the governor's wounds? One thing is clear: that someone had better re-examine the "superbullet" theory, and consider the possibility that Bullet 399—the only assassination bullet that has been ballistically matched to Oswald's rifle—was a plant.

NO ONE is as furious about the overlooked evidence as Penn Jones. Hardly a week goes by that he doesn't come across some startling agent's report or police affidavit buried in the 26 volumes, only to discover the Commission ignored it entirely. Recently he dug up an FBI interview with Arturo Alocer Ruiz, a Mexican attorney, and was intrigued enough to fly south with another reporter to visit attorney Alocer in his walled Spanish fortress in Mexico City. Alocer confirmed what he had told the FBI, giving additional details. Jones described him as "elderly, very dignified and very certain of what he saw."

Alocer was in San Antonio with his wife and a friend of hers on November 21, 1963, during President Kennedy's visit to that city and the day before his fateful trip to Dallas. At 9 in the morning the Alocers left the Gunter Hotel to go shopping and noticed a particularly obese woman standing near the entrance to the hotel. When they returned about 1 p.m. she was still there, apparently waiting for the Presidential motorcade which was about to pass in front of the hotel. They took careful note of her because of her appearance. They watched the motorcade pass, and noted that she left immediately thereafter. The following day the Alocers were watching TV accounts of the assassination when the interviews at the Oswald rooming house came on. Mrs. A. C. Johnson, the landlady, was on the screen, and Earlene Roberts, the plump housekeeper. And in the background Alocer, his wife and her friend were all startled to observe *the same obese lady* they'd seen in San Antonio. Two days later, after Ruby shot Oswald, the Alocers again saw the obese lady on TV; this time she was introduced as Eva Grant, sister of Jack Ruby. Eva Grant, a night club operator, was not questioned on her whereabouts on November 21. But she was not the only Ruby clan member reported watching Presidential motorcades on November 21st. One scared Dallas resident says he saw Jack Ruby himself in Houston when the President toured that city later the same afternoon. Ruby is unaccounted for between 3 and 7:30 p.m. on the 21st—ample time to fly to Houston, observe the motorcade and return.

[THE MISSING EVIDENCE]

PENN JONES and the "sleuths" have marshalled an impressive body of evidence to show that the Commission "solved" neither the assassination nor the murder of Tippit. They have exposed the Commission's religious determination not to track down leads pointing to other possible assassins and cop killers. And they have shown how the time limit given by President Johnson to the shorthanded Commission—"before the '64 elections"—meant the investigation could only be a frivolous one.

A Presidential assassination can shake the very fabric of a society. And if it is the result of conspiracy, as the evidence now available indicates, then the society is endangered as long as those responsible for its planning and execution are still at large. The "mysterious deaths" and intimidations alone are compelling enough reason for a new investigation, if only to establish whether or not they

are related to the Kennedy assassination.

It is time to reopen the investigation. And it is high time that the impressive quantity of missing evidence be "found," and that the mountain of withheld evidence be declassified and made available to the public. No matter what Penn Jones digs up, no matter what any private citizen uncovers about the assassination, the case cannot be solved until the suppressed evidence is released.

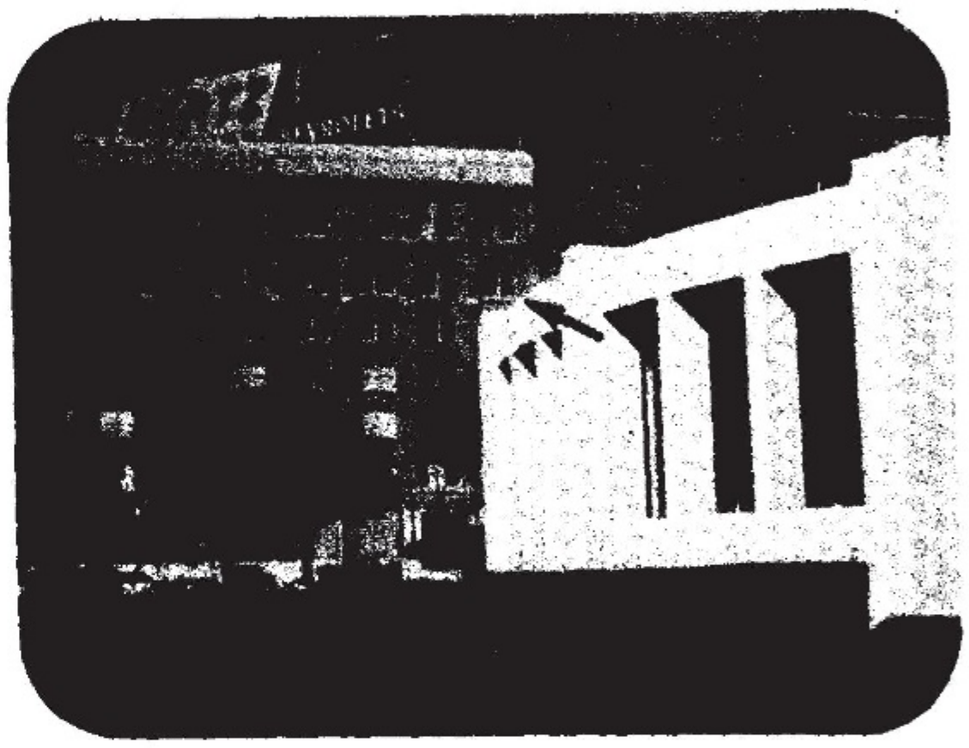
Among the missing evidence are the 22 color and 18 black and white photographs taken at the President's autopsy. Not even the Commission, nor the autopsy doctors themselves, were permitted to see them; the Commission saw only an artist's sketches based on an autopsy doctor's *memory* of the wounds. The photographs were turned over *undeveloped* to the Secret Service, according to FBI and Secret Service reports in the National Archives. The Secret Service states, in another Archives document, that "every item of tangible evidence" in its possession was turned over either to the Commission during its life, to the National Archives after the Commission disbanded, or was "placed in the custody of individuals designated by the late President's family." Archivist Simmons says the photographs are not in the Archives. No one seems to know where they are. Also missing are the x-rays of Kennedy's body, which were never seen by the Commission.

Another key piece of evidence is the Zapruder film. Abraham Zapruder, a Dallas clothing manufacturer, captured the assassination sequence on movie film. The original was purchased by Life magazine—"mainly to keep it off the market," says Richard Pollard, director of photography. Pollard says the original is uncut in any way. Not so with the copy of the film seen by the Commission and placed on file at the Archives. Not only are Zapruder frames 334 through 434 missing (showing the Grassy Knoll), but a splice appears, just about the time the Commission says Kennedy is first shot. The top of frame 208 is crudely spliced onto the bottom of frame 212; the intervening frames are missing. One of the first things a new investigation should call for is the release of the entire Zapruder film. The second thing a new investigation should ask is who spliced the Zapruder film? And why?

The Stemmons Freeway sign and a streetlamp post near where the President was shot have been unaccountably removed, as well as a manhole cover reportedly hit by a bullet. Where are they? Jacqueline Kennedy's freely given testimony about her husband's wounds has been "deleted." Where is it? An 18-page statement to police by key assassination witness S. M. Holland; notes by Captain Fritz and an FBI agent of their interrogation of Oswald; at least two motion picture films of the assassination confiscated by the FBI; 23 of the 54 documents supplied by the Texas attorney general's office, many of them relating to the Tippit murder—all are missing. Where are they?

More than one-third of the assassination-related documents in the National Archives are withheld by the "interested agencies." About half of the FBI reports and 90 per cent of the CIA reports are still classified.

Much evidence has been willfully destroyed or altered. The White House ordered the interior of the President's limousine cut up and destroyed; Johnson now drives around in the same car, newly outfitted, in which John Kennedy met his death. Governor Connally's suit, which Johnson's crony Cliff Carter signed for, was sent to be dry-cleaned and pressed before it could ever be examined as evidence. Navy Dr. Humes, who performed the autopsy on Kennedy, said he burned his original autopsy notes in his fireplace. The post office box application Oswald ostensibly filled out in the name of "Hidell" has been destroyed, despite postal regulations requiring they be kept for three years. The list goes on and on.



THE WARREN COMMISSION was appointed by Lyndon Johnson, was responsible to Johnson and respected a lawyer-client relationship with Johnson. It was truly "the President's Commission." A nationally syndicated columnist for the Hearst newspapers recently had an interview with Lyndon Johnson. He asked if it were true that Warren had been reluctant to head the Commission. Johnson replied in the affirmative. Warren, he said, had sent a note through an intermediary that he would not accept the job. "But I ordered him to," said the President.

The Hearst reporter asked if the President had read the recent books about the Kennedy assassination. No, Johnson replied, but an aide had given him a full report.

"What do you think?" asked the columnist.

The President looked down for a moment, knitted his brow, then fixed his doe eyes on the reporter and said:

"Warren's in trouble."